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Fairtrade Bananas in the Caribbean: Towards a Moral Economy of Recognition

Abstract

Working through a Caribbean case study, this paper examines the networks and associations of Fair Trade bananas as they move both materially and morally from farms in St Vincent and the Grenadines to supermarkets and households in the United Kingdom. In doing so, the paper provides grounded empirical evidence of Fair Trade's moral economy as experienced by banana producers in the Caribbean. The paper follows Nancy Fraser's distinction between ways of framing justice to argue that, in order to transcend its complex postcolonial positionalities, the Fair Trade Foundation needs to include recognition in its moral economy as well as representation and redistribution. The paper compares the moral framework of Fair Trade as an ideology and social movement with the lived experience of certified Fairtrade banana farmers in the Windward Islands who work mostly *for*, rather than *within*, an idealized moral economy. The paper also contributes to several recent debates in the agri-food literature exploring the interconnections between production and consumption, the role of materiality in contemporary food networks, the historical and (post)colonial nature of food moralities, and links between political and moral economies of food. Following an outline of recent debates about the moral economies of food and its relation to Fair Trade as a movement, the paper dissects the moral economy of the Fairtrade Foundation, highlighting the historical and geographical, material and symbolic, gendered and generational ways that food producers in the Global South (in this case, banana farmers in St Vincent and the Grenadines) may be counterposed to 'responsible' consumers in the Global North. Despite the good intentions of those who promote the Fair Trade movement through the Fairtrade Foundation and the Fairtrade Labelling Organisation (FLO), our case study reveals a moral economy of non- (or partial) recognition, which has a range of unintended consequences and paradoxical effects.

Introduction

Working through a Caribbean case study, this paper examines the networks and associations of Fair Trade bananas as they move both materially and morally from farms in St Vincent and the Grenadines to supermarkets and households in the United Kingdom. In doing so, we provide grounded empirical evidence of Fair Trade's moral economy as experienced by banana producers in the Caribbean. In particular, we follow Nancy Fraser's important distinction between different ways of framing justice through which she sought to clarify how economic disadvantage and cultural disrespect are intertwined and mutually supportive. Seeking to transcend divisions on the Left, Fraser (2000) described her project as the development of a critical theory of recognition that identifies and defends only those versions of the cultural politics of difference that can be coherently combined with the social politics of equality. She later proposed a distinction between different ways of framing justice, including the politics of representation, redistribution, and recognition (Fraser 2009). Deploying these ideas, we argue (particularly in part II) that the Fair Trade Foundation needs to include *recognition* in its moral economy as well as representation and redistribution, in order to transcend the complex postcolonial positionalities which emplace Vincentians as *producers* while actors in the global North are emplaced as *consumers* (cf. Mansvelt 2005: 85). The paper compares the moral framework of Fair Trade as an ideology and social movement with the lived experience of certified Fairtrade banana farmers in the Windward Islands who work mostly *for*, rather than *within*, an idealized western idea of moral economy.

The paper contributes to recent work that interrogates the universality of alternative food networks and their norms as conceptualised and practiced in western contexts (Wilson [ed] forthcoming; cf. Tsing 2009). By using a case study of the lived experiences of Caribbean banana farmers, we seek to animate geographical research into Fair Trade in disciplines such as human geography by questioning the 'democratic legitimacy of norms' (Fraser 2009: 28) perpetuated by Fair Trade and similar environmental and social justice movements. Like other work on Fair Trade (e.g.

Freidberg 2003; Lyon and Moberg 2010; Mutersbaugh and Lyon 2010; Besky 2014), we illustrate the historical and postcolonial nature of food moralities such as the Fair Trade movement¹ by arguing that banana farmers in St Vincent have become ‘emplaced’ (Mansvelt 2005: 85) in Fair Trade networks in ways that reinforce historical and geographical divides between producers in the (post)colonial world and consumers in the ‘developed’ world. Apart from this work, the paper also builds on recent arguments about the intersection of moral and political economies of food of which there are now an increasing number of examples (e.g. Busch 2000; Le Heron & Hayward 2002; Mincyte 2014; Wilson 2012, 2014a). Some writers such as Morgan *et al.* (2006) have identified political and moral economies with two competing tendencies or ‘meta-regulatory trends’ within contemporary agri-food markets: a ‘neo-liberal economy’ (characterized by increasingly globalized supply chains, the continued intensification of agricultural production and an ever-increasing concentration of retail power) and a ‘new moral economy’ (characterized by the development of alternative food networks, a return to more localized modes of production and more sustainable forms of consumption). Jackson *et al.* (2007) have argued, however, that this contrast can be overdrawn as ‘mainstream’ food producers have begun to see the commercial potential in appropriating the language of ‘alternative’ food networks, while ‘alternative’ systems of provisioning (such as the production of organic food) are increasingly falling into the hands of larger-scale producers and retailers (cf. Guthman 2003, 2004). Rather than counter-posing moral and political economies of food, therefore, this paper seeks to show how the political economy of food is moralized to varying degrees *and in various ways* and how ostensibly *moral* economies such as Fair Trade are underpinned by – and may inadvertently reproduce – the kind of structured inequalities that are associated with conventional (capitalist) political economies of food.²

The paper also brings together several recent debates in the agri-food literature. In the first instance, it seeks to add to the growing body of work that addresses the complex interconnections between the production and consumption of food rather than treating these processes as separate

‘moments’. Since Goodman and DuPuis (2002) called for agri-food scholars to bridge the production-consumption divide, there have been many such attempts, drawing on a range of approaches and conceptualizations from commodity chains and circuits to more complex networks and assemblages (for an overview, see Pritchard 2013). The paper also adds to recent work on the more-than-human dimensions of contemporary agri-food systems, emphasizing the role of humans *and* non-humans in the production and consumption of food. Within human geography, these ideas have been advanced by Whatmore (2002) and others whose work we draw on to enrich our analysis of moral economies of Fair Trade banana networks.³ Such work also emphasizes the materiality of specific foods such as bananas in actively shaping the networks through which their production and consumption is realized in practice.

The first part of this paper provides an overview of the moral foundations of the Fair Trade movement. We argue that the moral economy of Fair Trade resembles earlier projects in Britain that sought to connect commerce with care, as it positions people in the Global South as producers in relation to ethically ‘responsible’ consumers in the Global North. We then compare the moral framework of Fair Trade as a set of norms and practices with the lived experiences of banana farmers in St Vincent and the Grenadines (part of the Windward Islands in the Caribbean). After providing background information on the geographical and historical conditions that preceded the development of the Fair Trade movement in the Windward Islands, exemplified by the Fairtrade Foundation’s organization of banana networks, we assess the effectiveness of these networks using qualitative data that demonstrate the human and non-human, gendered and generational implications of the institutionalization of Fairtrade banana farming in St Vincent. Using Nancy Fraser’s work, we argue that Fair Trade networks are not entirely effective in scaling-up Fair Trade’s moral economy since the ways its institutions and standards have been implemented in St Vincent and the Grenadines perpetuate the historical *non-recognition* of local norms and non-producer positionalities.

In order to assess the effectiveness of Fairtrade markets, standards, and moralities for Caribbean banana farmers, we use empirical data that focuses on the Fairtrade networks within which they operate. During January 2010, Wilson and her colleague, Wendy-Ann Isaac (a crop scientist), conducted a series of interviews with nearly 20 Fairtrade banana farmers in St Vincent. These were mostly women, and were selected via a snowball sampling method from a total of around 200 Fairtrade certified farmers in St Vincent (who are also mostly women, as detailed in Part II, below). Interviews were also conducted with other key stakeholders in the Windward Island Fairtrade banana industry, including the president of the Windward Island Farmers Association (WINFA) and officials from the Port Authority of St Vincent and the Grenadines. Accompanied by Isaac, Wilson participated in the day-to-day activities of banana farmers and attended a meeting hosted by the Langley Park Fairtrade Group.

I Moral economies of commerce and care

[M]orality is a geographical [and historical] result, in the sense that it arises in distinctive and changing geographical circumstances. This refers not only to the particular local conditions in which moral codes become an integral part of a people's culture or way of life but also to the spatial relationships with other peoples which have bearing on how they are understood, represented, and regarded as possible subjects of moral responsibility (Smith 1998: 17).

Before turning to our case study of Fairtrade bananas, we focus in more detail on the concept of moral economy itself, as it developed in Britain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We do this to show how more recent ideas of moral economy relate to the development of the Fair Trade movement in the United Kingdom. This discussion leads us to possible historical and geographical precedents for Fair Trade's moral economy, which may impede the recognition of Vincentian Fairtrade farmers' concerns, experiences, and social norms in Fairtrade banana networks.

Like many of the key words and phrases in contemporary food studies, 'moral economy' has a complex and contested history (cf. Jackson 2013). While the term can be traced back to the work of Adam Smith and other political theorists from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, its most

prominent modern exponent was the British social historian E P Thompson. Thompson defined the moral economy as a social state in which 'community membership supersedes price as a basis of entitlement' (Thompson 1993 [1971]: 338, footnote 2). The term has thus typically been associated – in more or less romanticised terms – with traditional societies characterized by non-market and/or close-knit relations of care. Like that between political and moral economies, however, distinctions between market and non-market relations, or commerce and care, are historically and geographically contingent (Trentmann 2007). Though it is impossible to expand upon this point here, it is clear that money and bread – perhaps the best symbols of commerce and care, respectively – were at odds with one another in the period that Thompson was describing in Britain around the passage of the Corn Laws (1846). Just before this legislation was ratified, the price of grain was too high for the average household to be able to buy bread and the price was further inflated due to state protections. These circumstances prompted what were later called 'bread riots' and, ultimately, an opening of the British economy to cheap grains from Britain's settler colonies in Australia and elsewhere in the Commonwealth. Thompson argued that, since bread was a staple food in nineteenth-century Britain, rioting was a justifiable moral response to the denial of people's entitlement to affordable food.

It is one of the ironies of current debates about 'moral economy' that in its earliest modern usage (by Thompson and others) moral economy referred to the need to liberalize global food markets to cheapen the price of grain, while more recently the term has been used in agri-food studies in just the opposite sense, as a counter to the liberalization of global food markets. The paradoxical uses of the term reflect historical and geographical tensions, as well as ideological resolutions, between commerce and care, market and non-market relations that emerged in Britain during the period of the Corn Laws. In advocating a moral economy perspective, Thompson did not argue that markets were entirely disconnected from morality. Through passing the Corn Laws, Britain gained access to cheaper markets abroad, which ensured food entitlements for its citizens. The counter of its care for citizens at home

was a new spatial configuration of commerce – and very different modalities of care – in Britain’s colonies.

Rather than counter-posing morality and markets, then, one might ask *which* markets are at play, satisfying *whose* needs and at *what* scale? Like geographers who argue that an ethics of care can reach beyond the ‘here and now’ of territorial or familial partialities (e.g. Smith 1998, 2000; Barnett *et al.* 2011), historian Frank Trentmann (2007) argues that long-distance trade may be just as moral as tight-knit communities. Tracing the genealogy of ethical consumer movements such as Fair Trade, Trentmann gives examples of global moral economies of food and trade in the past, particularly consumer advocacy groups in Britain such as the ‘Buy Empire Goods’ campaign during the interwar period. Imperialist consumers representing the Buy Empire Goods campaign (mainly middle and upper-class housewives) supported producers in the Commonwealth not only through their purchases but also in their advocacy of moral values such as solidarity, health, and welfare. While the campaigners strove for a moral community that included some (white farmers in Australia, South Africa and New Zealand) more than others, their consumerist moral economy also included the work of ‘natives’ in places such as India and Kenya, which was presented and promoted at fetes and exhibitions (Trentmann 2007: 1084).

Drawing from geographers who have argued that proximity is not necessarily a requirement for community, Trentmann disputes the assumption that relationships of care weaken as one moves from smaller scales (e.g. the household) to larger scales (e.g. the globe):

Caring relationships ... do not simply proceed outwards from family to compatriots to distant others. A reverse process is simultaneously at work, where ideologies connecting people across vast spaces, such as imperialism, shape private identities and notions of caring (Trentmann 2007: 1086).

Like imperial exchange relations, Fairtrade commodity networks ‘facilitat[e] a material and discursive “scale jump” (Glassman 2001) that, in effect, stitches consumers to the very places and

livelihood struggles of production via embedded ethical, political, and discursive networks' (Goodman 2004: 894). Through so-called 'reflexive' consumption (DuPuis 2000, Guthman 2003), people in places like the US and the UK can 'literally buy-in to the politics of Fairtrade and alternative development' (Goodman 2004: 895). Indeed, as Barnett *et al.* argue, ethical consumers such as those who purchase Fairtrade are not just passive repositories of demand but formidable political actors whose decisions combine moral ideas of responsibility and care for distant strangers with 'the routines and rhythms of everyday life' (2011: 18).

While there are, undoubtedly, political potentialities associated with ethical consumption – particularly when viewing consumption as a site of everyday politics – human geographers such as Susanne Freidberg (2003) argue that the Fairtrade Foundation's conventions and standards (implemented by the Fairtrade Labelling Organisation, FLO,⁴ to which we shall return) also resemble neocolonial discourses. Such tensions and contradictions of Fair Trade have been explored in a series of articles in this journal edited by Mutersbaugh and Lyon (2010) using ethnographic evidence to examine the transparency and democratic implications of ethical commodity networks. While the certification process is designed to render the ethical qualities of these networks more transparent, the contributors to this special issue reveal many shortcomings in practice. Mirroring our own argument, the editors highlight how ethical commodities are produced by and within economic and social institutions that reproduce existing power relations (Mutersbaugh & Lyon 2010: 27). They suggest that their ethical character is immanent within these commodity systems rather than external to them and that they are subject to place-based social and ecological relations (*ibid.*: 28). The case studies in that special issue further demonstrate the deep historical roots and unequal power relations that characterise contemporary ethical trade networks including the way that buyer-producer interactions are frequently governed by neocolonial institutions and oligopolistic markets (*ibid.*: 29). For example, Raynolds and Ngcwangu (2010) explore how the production of Fair Trade Rooibos tea in South Africa is shaped by the

needs of US buyers and consumers. Also prefiguring our own findings, contributors demonstrate the gendered character of ethical commodity networks including those involving the trading of cotton and coffee where women's lives have been enhanced by certification practices, affording them greater authority over farm operations (Bassett 2010, Lyon et al. 2010). Finally, contributors to the special issue highlight some of the ironies of certification practices such as when ethics itself becomes the commodity that is subject to market exchange or when celebrity endorsement crowds out producer-based testimonials regarding the ethical qualities of particular goods (cf. Prudham 2009, Goodman 2010).

Like the above contributions, we also consider the moral and material weight of 'rich' consumers vis-à-vis 'poor' producers in what we call the global moral economy of Fair Trade. These longer historical geographies position Fair Trade more problematically in terms of the 'troubled genealogy of consumption and power' described by Trentmann (2007: 1081), suggesting that majority world producers rarely if ever enter into global alternative food networks on equal terms. Indeed, the very act of being a consumer in a world dominated by normative rules of supply and demand 'betrays an assumption of superiority in moral worth relative to others' (Sayer 2003: 359). As Wilson (2014a: 34) argues, our current model of liberalism is itself driven by a kind of moral economy, according to which the most 'worthy' are consumers who satisfy their own preferences, enabling an unfettered global flow of supply and demand.

Historical and present-day 'power geometries' (Massey 1991) that connect consumers in the minority world to producers in the majority world are perpetuated by an overemphasis in the Global North on some identifying qualities of producers 'in need of development' over others (cf. Bryant and Goodman 2004). Underlying a uniform designation as producers *for Northern consumers* are power relations that reinforce past inequalities and undermine consumer-producer relations imagined at scales other than the global (see Kneafsey 2010). As the president of the Windward Island Farmers' Association (WINFA), the primary producer organization for the Fairtrade Foundation in the Windward

Islands, insists: 'The banana is like all other export crops [in the Caribbean]: sugar, coffee, cocoa. It is a problem that people still see as a European export crop since the banana could assist in regional food security'.

The global producer-consumer network imagined by Fair Trade campaigners not only ignores the historical precedents of uneven consumption – particularly the prevalence of overconsumption in the Global North (Shreck 2002: 21) – but also neglects the moral dilemma of basing socially-just sustainable development on the lifestyle choices and preferences of Northern consumers (Goodman 2004: 909-10). By contrast, farmers in St Vincent who work with the Fairtrade Foundation see *themselves as consumers* as well as producers. As argued below, many Vincentian farmers (especially of the younger generation) engage in farming *in order to* become modern consumers of highly-valued commodities such as expensive cars and houses. Indeed, though the Fairtrade Foundation actively encourages transnational relations of care, 'the caring in [the] Fair Trade [movement] all too easily envisages a Northern consumer and a Southern producer. But people in the South are also consumers ... [and] caring is not a relationship between equals, as feminist theorists have pointed out (Trentmann 2007: 1086).

The stylization of Vincentian banana farmers as producers for Northern consumers also disregards producer-consumer banana networks that work at other scales. As evidenced by the president of WINFA's statement cited above, the historical positioning of Vincentian banana farmers as producers for Northern consumers in the global economy hinders present attempts to diversify banana plots to meet the food security needs of *Caribbean* consumers.

Similar to the other work on Fair Trade outlined earlier, we argue that relations between Fair Trade producers and consumers (and other participants in the Fair Trade network) resemble historical power relations that developed as a result of colonialism (Freidberg 2003, Bryant and Goodman 2004, Trentmann 2007). Our unique contribution, however, is to show how Fair Trade banana networks

undermine what Nancy Fraser (2009) calls the *recognition* of people in St Vincent and the Grenadines. Singular designations of Vincentian farmers as producers emplace these individuals in fixed roles, perpetuating a non-recognition of multiple identifications people make in relation to a wide variety of identities and values, only some of which are embedded in global market relations. Moreover, as we will argue in the next section, Fairtrade institutions and standards may override local social norms that contradict Fairtrade's moral economy of justice and sustainability. Though banana farmers in St Vincent may also see themselves as consumers with their own market preferences, their economic aims and desires are often undermined by Northern moralities and practices that burden them with the responsibility to produce food in ways that conform to the moral economy of Fair Trade activists in the global North. As we shall see, this moral economy of Fair Trade may, in turn, be adopted and adapted by Vincentian banana farmers; however, their full democratic participation in the process requires what Fraser (1996: 25) calls 'participatory parity' or the ability to express and act on one's values in a way that promotes the 'equal moral worth of human beings' (*ibid.*: 32).

Without dismissing the political, social, and ecological potentialities of Fair Trade banana networks which have been addressed elsewhere (Raynolds 2002, Klein 2008; see also Lyon and Moberg 2010), in the following section we critically review some discrepancies between the ideal moral economy of the Fairtrade Foundation and the everyday experiences of Fairtrade banana farmers in St Vincent. We argue that the spatial, temporal, and normative 'glue' that connects producers, marketers, distributors, and consumers in the 'international moral economy' of Fair Trade (Fridell 2006, cited by Trentmann 2007: 1081) is not as strong as it could be. This is not only because the 'alterity' of agri-food agendas like Fair Trade is constrained by new forms of neoliberal governmentality (Watts *et al.* 2005; Jackson *et al.* 2007), but also because internal divisions exist within the Fair Trade network itself, which have partly emerged from disconnected histories and geographies.

II Fairtrade in St Vincent and the Grenadines

A brief overview of banana production in the Windward Islands

Historically grown as a monoculture (though with some diversification on small plots of 2-5 hectares) (Momsen 2009: 136), Windward Island bananas from St Vincent and the Grenadines, St Lucia, Guadeloupe and Martinique have typically been grown for export to the United Kingdom (see Fig. 1). In the imperial exchange relationship and moral economy that developed from the mid-1950s, the Windwards shipped bananas to the UK through the British shipping company Fyffes (now Geest Line) once a week, while the same fleet came to St Vincent and other West Indian islands with British manufactures such as Guinness stout and tinned mutton. The material quality of bananas – their protective peel, the temperature at which they keep, the ability to be picked when green and to arrive almost ripe at the port – was certainly a factor in establishing this agri-food network between the UK and the Windwards. Consumer and market-driven tastes for fetishized ‘exotic’ foods like bananas also played a role.⁵ Because bananas were easy to transport with a ready market in the UK, companies like Fyffes decided to ship bananas one way and manufactured goods the other, establishing a relationship of dependency on food imports that persists to the present (though now the primary supplier of food imports to the Windwards is the United States). Provisioning networks between St Vincent and the UK – involving UK consumers and Vincentian producers – also continue, with the Geest Line sailing once a week to St Vincent filled with commodities from the UK, and sailing back to the UK filled with what are now mostly Fairtrade bananas.

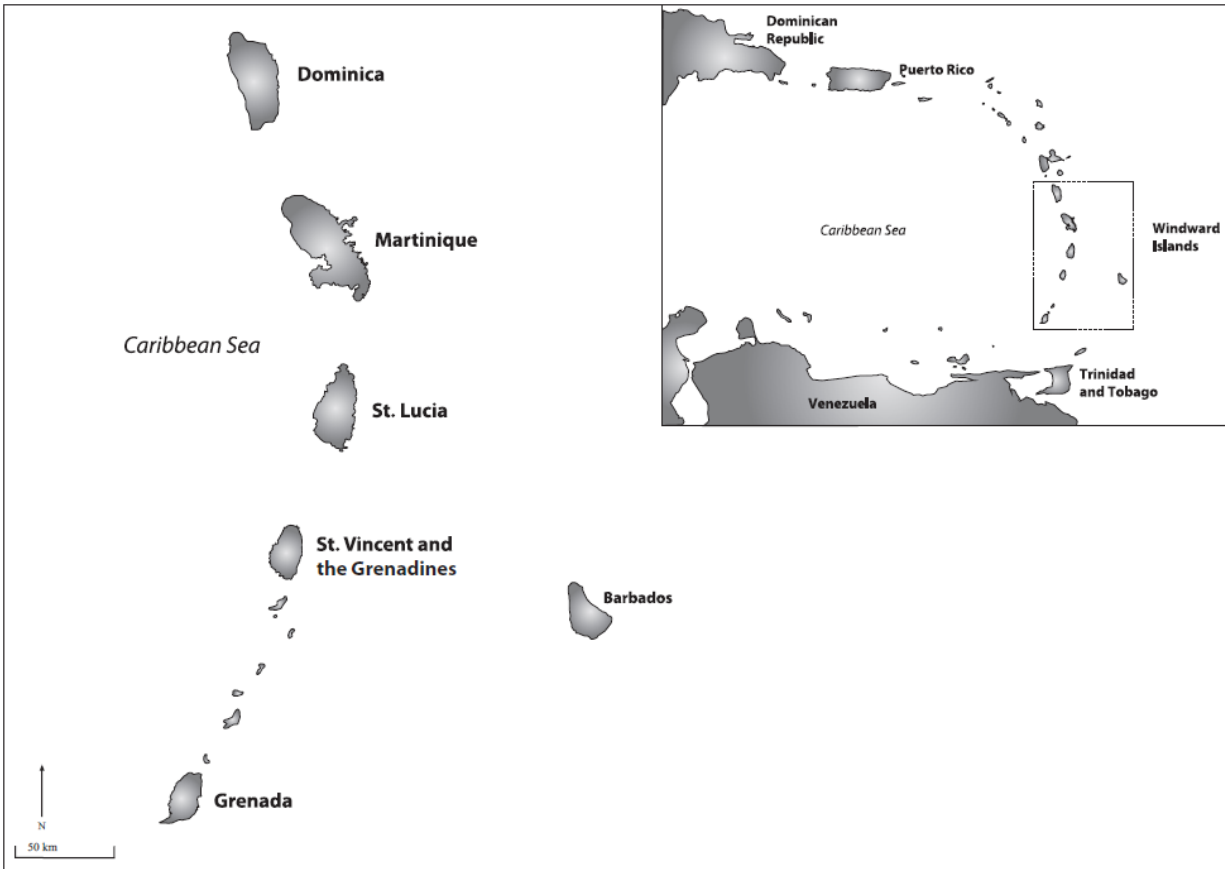


Fig. 1: The Windward Islands

Until very recently, the price of bananas from the Windward Islands and therefore the livelihoods of what were once about 25,000 farmers were protected by legislation first implemented by the United Kingdom and later adopted, in altered form, by the European Union. Exports of bananas from the Windward Islands to the UK boomed from 1956, when the UK increased duties on bananas from non-Commonwealth countries such as West Cameroon and the Canary Islands. By 1964, 57 percent of the value of all exports from St Vincent and the Grenadines was in bananas (Persaud 1966, cited by Momsen 2009: 130).

In 1975 the EU signed the Lomé Agreement, which offered a protected market for commodities like bananas to former EU colonies in the Africa, Pacific, and Caribbean (ACP) regions. Like Trentmann's

(2007) account of the Buy Empire Goods campaign in the British imperial period, the Lomé Agreement may be seen as a kind of ‘double-movement’ of market liberalism (Polanyi 1944), which was based on the need to create social protections for postcolonial peoples. Part of this responsibility was to extend relations of care, which coexisted or even replaced instrumental or profit-based relations. As with earlier imperialist consumers who incorporated non-market values into global exchange relationships, from 1975 to 1992, statutory and non-statutory companies in the UK and EU paid preferential prices for commodities like bananas. Associated with former imperial powers, these companies and the consumers they served were thought to be better ‘placed’ than others to care for their former colonies (Smith 1998: 29). Indeed, as emphasized above, such moral economies emerge through the formation of specific positionalities in space and time.

With preferential access to EU markets, the Windward Island banana trade flourished until the late 1980s (a period Vincentian farmers refer to as ‘green gold’), and continued until 1992 when, due to illegal imports of so-called ‘dollar bananas’ from US-owned plantations in Central America, there was a glut of bananas in UK supermarkets.⁶ Prices for bananas fell from £1.19 per kilogram in 1991 to £0.68 in 2007 (Momsen 2009: 131) and the market share of Windward bananas fell from about two-thirds of UK bananas in the early 1990s to only 19% in 2000 (ibid: 5). Along with the supermarket price wars, changing EU policies would eventually erode UK protections and, with them, the institutional (if not cultural) foundations of the post-imperial moral economy. After the World Trade Organization and the United States government (under President Clinton) finally won their fight against ‘non-discrimination’ in banana markets in December 2009, the moral economy of preferential treatment for ACP countries lived on through Fair Trade producer-consumer networks. By this time, the number of banana producers in the Windward Islands had fallen drastically, from around 25,000 to just 5,000 farmers, more than 85% of which were Fairtrade certified (<http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/en/farmers-and-workers/bananas/dorothy-agard>).

The self-consciously 'fair' trade of bananas in St Vincent and the other Windward Islands began in the late 1990s after a drastic fall in prices for bananas caused by a series of reforms to a once-preferential EU banana regime. The ultimate aim of Fair Trade is to re-embed social and environmental 'externalities' into the economic process, and to prevent the alienation of consumers from producers, enabling consumers in the Global North to take a more active role in the commodity chain:

By demystifying global relations of exchange and challenging market competitiveness based solely on price, the Fair Trade movement creates a progressive opening for bridging the widening North/South divide and wresting control of the agro-food system away from oligopolistic transnational corporations infamous for their socially and environmentally destructive business practices (Reynolds 2000, cited by Momsen 2009: 134).

The Fair Trade model is concerned with both the 'politics of representation' and the 'politics of redistribution' (Goodman 2004: 892). In terms of representation, the Fairtrade Foundation and FLO (the Fairtrade Labelling Organization) make it a requirement for all Fairtrade certified farmers to join national and municipal Fairtrade groups, with mandatory meetings held monthly (further explained below). In terms of redistribution, the Fairtrade Foundation provides a minimum price to producers to cover the costs of sustainable production (in Jan 2015, this was USD \$0.42/kg), which is guaranteed to be equal to or higher than the world market price for bananas. Along with the minimum price, the Fairtrade Foundation adds a social premium, which provides an additional \$1/18.14 kg for social development projects (explained below; see http://www.fairtrade.net/price-and-premium-info.html?no_cache=1&tx_zwo3pricing_pi1%5BproductType%5D=11&tx_zwo3pricing_pi1%5Bcountry%5D=0&tx_zwo3pricing_pi1%5Bsubmit_button%5D=Go). Though these benefits may improve the social and economic security of Fairtrade certified farmers in St Vincent, they are sometimes surpassed by profits from regional banana markets that are non-Fairtrade certified (of which the authors could not find data),

which may at times offer a better price than Fairtrade markets (personal communication, banana farmer, 21/1/10).

Adopting Fraser's terminology, we would argue that though the Fairtrade Foundation is dedicated to a politics of redistribution as well as the democratic representation of farmers in Fairtrade meetings, in practice, Fairtrade institutions and standards often undermine the *recognition* of Fairtrade banana farmers in St Vincent as more than just producers for Northern consumers (cf. Fraser 1996, 2009). By providing evidence for the non-recognition of Fairtrade banana farmers in St Vincent, we seek to increase understanding of the multiple, shifting, and relational trajectories that work both within and outside of Fairtrade's ideal moral-economic framework. Indeed, we argue that there are as many *disconnections* as connections between producers and consumers in the Fairtrade Foundation's organization of the Vincentian-British banana network. The goal here is not to undermine the successes of the Fair Trade movement in general or the Fairtrade Foundation in particular, but to add detail to current debates about the operation of Fair Trade in practice as a way of clarifying complex and sometimes contradictory moral economies of food.

Fairtrade banana networks in St Vincent

As a small, volcanic island, St Vincent (the largest of the 32-island country, St Vincent and the Grenadines) is characterized by a hilly landscape with very few level expanses of land (see Fig. 2). Historically, Vincentian small farmers have cultivated bananas in sloped areas, mirroring earlier inhabitations of slaves who fled from scarce plantation flatlands. Since the mid-twentieth century, hill farmers have used chemical fertilizers to control the condition of over fifty types of soils that cover the island (Momsen 2009: 130-131). The difficult terrain and complex mixture of soils on volcanic islands like St Vincent contrasts with the large, flat expanses of land in Central American countries like Costa

Rica, Ecuador, and Honduras, where so-called ‘dollar bananas’ are grown on rich, alluvial soils that need little if any fertilizer (ibid.: 2).



Fig. 2: View from a hillside Fairtrade banana farm on St Vincent (source: Wilson)

Promotional material for Fairtrade bananas on the Fairtrade Foundation’s website makes clear reference to the geographical challenges of growing bananas on St Vincent: ‘Caribbean bananas ... are grown on small, family farms ... [with] higher overall costs [than on Latin American banana plantations] because of the hilly terrain, poor soil, low yields, and higher transport and labour costs’ (http://server-e9-11.hosting.imerja.com/producers/bananas/winfa_2/nioka_abbott_banana_farmer_st_vincent.aspx?printversion=true). By contrast, according to some banana farmers interviewed for this paper, the Fairtrade Foundation largely neglects the role of soils and terrain on St Vincent. Indeed, in contrast to claims on the Foundation’s website that juxtapose the challenges of banana farming on St Vincent with the ‘vast, flat, mechanized plantations [in Latin America] where the low consumer price is borne by the

workers ... and [the] intensive use of agrichemicals', Vincentian farmers interviewed for this project claimed that the production model implemented by the Fairtrade Labeling Organization (FLO) is more suitable for banana production in Latin America than the Windward Islands. Consider the following statements taken from interviews with banana growers conducted by Wilson and Isaac in January 2010:

People from the Fairtrade Labeling Organization do not consult the producers enough. ... We are still subordinate in terms of banana production. The model that FLO uses comes from Latin America. Latin American standards dominate. ... There have been very few adjustments over the years that deal with the steepness of the slope on which you can grow bananas to control run off. But this is a West Indian reality. That is how our land is; there is hardly any flat land in St Vincent. ... Certain regulations are not relevant to our circumstances (president of WINFA).

People in England fail to realize that the culture in Latin America is very different from us. But they have a global policy for all Fairtrade members. What could be beneficial for Latin Americans could be detrimental to us, and vice versa. Who sits at the negotiating table to make these decisions? (Fairtrade banana farmer in her fifties).

Fair Trade [as instituted by the Fairtrade Foundation] is not fair. Some people [are] getting preferential treatment. Some individuals, groups, are treated differently than others. They talk to the Latin Americans. I talk and talk and talk and answer questions asked by people like you and they do these projects and we never hear about it again. That is what I mean by special treatment (another Fairtrade banana farmer in her fifties).

According to these statements, the Latin American model for banana production implemented by the Fairtrade Foundation and FLO perpetuates a *non-recognition* of local factors of production, such as the slope of the land and the composition of soils on St Vincent.

Moreover, it was clear from the interviews that most farmers had a different understandings of social and environmental issues from those instituted by the Fairtrade Foundation and FLO. Unlike consumers in the Global North whose purchasing decisions reflect concerns for the environment, Vincentian farmers do not always want to produce bananas with few agrochemical inputs. As one Vincentian banana farmer put it: 'No spraying, more work' (cited by Momsen 2009: 138). Most Vincentian banana farmers interviewed complained about the work required to implement Fairtrade's low-input model: 'I didn't want to [be certified as Fair Trade] at first. I thought the work was too much. You have to weed and all. ... [Now I] deflower, wash, and pack myself'; 'Now there is so much more to do than before. You get back home and have to do all the papers'.

The lack of recognition, or deliberative processes, surrounding the social and environmental aims of Fair Trade was also reflected in contrasting attitudes to food safety and quality standards. In Grande Sable and Langley Park, the two municipalities on the east coast of St Vincent where Wilson and Isaac conducted research, about half the members of Fairtrade producer organizations had recently left the industry. In order to be certified by FLO, farmers must minimize their use of herbicides and fertilizers, pay for and properly dispose of fertilizer-infused bags in which banana bunches grow, store all chemicals in enclosed buildings and maintain clean work spaces (a toilet and sink with soap are required on all farms), among other technical requirements. The banana farmers that remain in the industry struggle to adhere to FLO's changing regulations and standards, and many complained of a lack of consultation between themselves and Fairtrade technical experts. As a result, some didn't want to go through the certification process. The Global Gap or EurepGAP certifications, 'which you have to *pay* for', were mentioned as an example of the lack of consultation between FLO and the producers (cf. Campbell 2005):

Inspectors come to see that you are up to European supermarkets' standards. ... There are even regulations about the curvature of bananas! ... Sometimes farmers find difficulty in meeting the

standards. There is increasingly a multiplicity of them. Every supermarket has different standards. For example, Sainsbury's has different boxes. ... They lump all of it together and say that it is *Fair Trade*, but it is not (president of WINFA).

If [farmers] are certified, they are guaranteed a market. ... To maintain certification, you need to go through a yearly audit. Only minor 'non-conformances' [are] allowed. If they are major, you have twenty-eight days to fix it. If it is not corrected, the auditors come back. If it is still not corrected after another twenty-eight days, you cannot be certified (Fairtrade banana farmer in her forties).

In addition to standards related to cleanliness and hygiene (during production and processing) and aesthetics, farmers must limit their use of herbicides, a long-established practice in Vincentian farming: 'We have a culture of herbicide-use'. Because of the long-term use of herbicides and fertilizers on the island, crop diseases such as Black Sigatoka or spot leaf disease and weed infestations of watergrass (a foreign weed introduced by the British in the mid-twentieth century)⁷ have exacerbated the ever-increasing dependence on agrochemicals. Until Fair Trade came along, high agrochemical use was not usually questioned by Vincentian farmers (cf. Grossman 1992). According to Momsen (2009: 137), 94% of banana farmers in the Windwards used agrochemicals when she conducted research in 2008.

The high use of agrochemicals in St Vincent coincides with current attitudes towards agricultural work in many West Indian communities that are rooted in a brutal history of plantation slavery or indentured labour. The majority of Vincentians prefer to work in jobs other than agriculture,⁸ and young people tend to stigmatize agricultural work the most. As argued below, Vincentian youth are

more interested in accumulating *economic* value than promoting the kinds of moral economic or environmental values upheld by the Fairtrade Foundation:

There is an old colonial feeling that agriculture is for people that can't do anything else. Even farmers are encouraging their children to seek opportunities elsewhere (president of WINFA). Like young people in St Vincent who choose less laborious forms of work, most Vincentian banana farmers prefer to use agrochemicals to lessen the amount of labour needed to produce bananas. By contrast, FLO's technical standards derive from the cultural politics of environmentalism in the United Kingdom (and other places, like the United States), a politics that not only encourages people in Britain to go 'back to the land', but also relies on the hard work of majority world producers. Indeed, though most banana farmers are emplaced as *producers* in the Fair Trade network, they have long been *consumers* of fertilizers, herbicides, and other agrochemicals, partially under the influence of an earlier colonial model for high-input, modernist agriculture.

Despite the persistence of modernist values like high-input production in St Vincent, many farmers interviewed – particularly women in their forties and fifties – valued the health and environmental benefits of the Fairtrade Foundation's model for banana farming.

A lady introduced Fairtrade to us. There were fewer chemicals and I liked that. You have to get authorization for chemical use. I recently got permission and sprayed so you won't see watergrass on my land. ... It is hard because you hardly could get a man [hired labourer] to go out. They feel the rules of Fairtrade too hard. Most men want to spray, but they have to wait until they tell us to spray (Fairtrade farmer in her mid-fifties).

According to this account, men in St Vincent are more likely to use herbicides than women. Yet only 30% of Fairtrade banana farmers in the Windward Islands are women (http://www.bananalink.org.uk/sites/default/files/Women's%20leaflet_2015.pdf), and it is women who are more likely to adopt Fairtrade's moral economic values of sustainability, redistribution, and democratic representation than

men. This is evidenced by the high representation of women leaders in Fairtrade Groups: according to the NGO Banana Link (*ibid.*), women banana farmers lead most of the Fairtrade Group meetings in St Vincent and the other Windward Islands. Women's prominent (if still minority) role in Fairtrade banana networks is consistent with the histories of West Indian farming in which women played an important economic role as farmers of household and cash crops (i.e. Barrow 1993, Brierley 1993). As a recent study published by the Fairtrade Foundation suggests, women's participation in Fairtrade farming is key to its success in promoting gender equality and economic development ([http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/en/media-centre/news/march-2015/gender-equality-good-for-women-business-and-development;Mar 2015](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/en/media-centre/news/march-2015/gender-equality-good-for-women-business-and-development;Mar%2015)). The report cites a female Fairtrade banana producer in the Dominican Republic, who sees women's participation in Fairtrade producer organisations as: 'giv[ing] women the right to vote, to participate in decision making, to receive benefits and to live with dignity' (*ibid.*).

Yet local gender dynamics and norms often hinder Fairtrade's promotion of gender equality, even if women farmers actively adopt the Fairtrade Foundation's goals of sustainable and more equitable conditions of production. In St Vincent, most women banana farmers must hire male farm labourers who are, as the earlier quote suggests, more likely to 'want to spray':

I am very angry, as a female farmer. Females are at a disadvantage. [Male] workers feel like they do what they can like, they walk all over us. Workers don't listen. They come for two hours and then go. Sometimes you have to humble yourself because they may not come back, and you need the work (female farmer in her forties).

Unless a significant amount of labour is invested in the soil to create favourable agro-ecological conditions, the shift from heavy agro-chemical use to the little or no use required for Fairtrade certification is nearly impossible. In contrast to agro-ecological farmers in Cuba, who have recently received plots of land and value hard work for the 'patrimony' of the nation (Wilson 2014a, Wilson 2014b), many Vincentian banana farmers have left the industry because 'it is too much work for what

they pay'. It is for this reason that many younger farmers have left the Fair Trade banana industry to seek earnings in the illegal marijuana market:

In St Vincent, ganja production has come side-by-side with the decrease in the banana industry. Prices for fertilizers, the gradual elimination of herbicides, diseases like Moko wiped out so many bananas. ... It is hard to be certified. ... It is difficult for me to keep up with the certification [process] because the land is not favourable enough. ... Labour is [also] a problem. Young people lime [hang out] on the block, smoke what they shouldn't smoke (general manager of WINFARM, the commercial branch of Fair Trade in the Windward Islands).

Younger men who do not have families are willing to take the risk [of marijuana production]. I remember one man tells me – he was 22 – if he did this he could make up to \$100,000 [East Caribbean dollars, or about USD 37,000]. Even if he is in prison for three years, it is still a lot of money. ... This persists in spite of massive eradication programmes. ... Young people don't have the same stigma [of marijuana as do older people in St Vincent]. ... The Leeward coast is the most affected. ... [Where there] were [once] backward villages there are now nice houses. When people see that, what are you going to tell them? (president of the Windward Island Farmers' Association).

At least for the younger generations in St Vincent and other West Indian islands (for Trinidad, see Miller 1994), 'making it' means investing in visual manifestations of wealth like cars and houses. The moral drive for low-input, high-labour production, on the other hand, is associated with long-term values like preserving national biodiversity. While these moral values have been adopted by farmers who practice agro-ecology in Cuba (Wilson 2014a: ch. 6, 2014b), in the West Indies, many farmers' values are more closely tied to capitalist motivations: 'West Indian farmers have always been very individualistic and agricultural producer cooperatives have never been very successful in the region'

(Momsen 2009: 135). These historical circumstances further complicate the contemporary moral economy of Fairtrade banana production in St Vincent. Values of care such as those exemplified by FLO's environmental standards, stand in direct contrast with the long-term positioning of West Indian farmers in commercial networks that emplace them as modern *consumers* who prefer the kind of work that offers a chance to 'make it' through conspicuous consumption. Indeed, 'purist positions' that emphasize care over commerce are often considered 'the luxury of consumers and activists, not producers, who may side with market forces' (Renard 2003, cited by Goodman 2004: 903). Though the Fairtrade Foundation's banana networks are undoubtedly tied to market liberal markets, its moral vision is underpinned by a view of banana production as something besides commodified behaviour, which should be remunerated justly and carried out in a sustainable fashion. But some Fairtrade banana farmers/workers in St Vincent, particularly men and younger generations, remain unrecognized in this moral economy. Their economic logics may emphasize commerce over care, highlighting efficient production conditions and significant profits made possible by the use of agro-chemicals or by leaving banana farming for more lucrative, and sometimes illegal, activities.

Like the value of environmental sustainability, the Fairtrade Foundation and the FLO have also tried to institute other moral economic values such as community development and democratic participation. Again, the translation of such values does not always coincide with the recognition of *all* Vincentian farmers, who may opt for contrasting forms of value, such as individual benefits. The Fairtrade Foundation's values of community development and democratic participation are exemplified by the 'social premium', a sum derived from a mandatory donation of roughly US \$1.00 per 18-kg box of bananas (as noted earlier). In St Vincent, the social premium contributes to farmers' training in Fairtrade standards and to community development projects such as science education programmes, school buses to transport children from rural areas to Kingstown (the capital), school libraries, and sustainable agro-tourism centres.

Although these development efforts are certainly commendable in promoting Fairtrade as a form of ethical consumption, they are also criticized for devolving state responsibilities to the farmer, 'reduc[ing] ... pressure on national governments to provide for rural welfare and environmental protection' (Momsen 2009: 141). In the interviews, many complaints were voiced about how the social premium is allocated, one angry (male) farmer even comparing its aims to former colonial times:

Fairtrade does not help our society. You should run from Fairtrade! ... Every time we [Caribbeans] get some offer we just jump because it comes from the outside. ... We need a Caribbean brand or a Caribbean farmers' brand ... the Fairtrade brand is crap. It is international. There is no advantage for the Caribbean. People in Europe are dictating the terms. It is the same old English coming in and telling us what to do on the farm, telling us what to do with the social premium ... we should be re-investing in production! Not spending the social premium on education, computers ... that is the state's job! (banana farmer in his forties).

As evidenced by his angry words, the responsibility taken by Northern actors to counteract prior injustices can be understood as a politics of *disconnection* as well as connection, for former colonial peoples may choose autonomy over well-intentioned altruism. In line with our present argument, Noxolo *et al.* (2012) claim that responsibility is intertwined with the uneven ability to make authoritative representations, and that 'responsible' agents may not always represent the interests of those on the receiving end. From the interviews it is clear that there are indeed disconnections between social actors who take up the responsibilities set by Fairtrade's moral economy (mainly women) and many others (particularly younger men), who may have different values and priorities. While the social premium enables positive change in Vincentian communities, many farmers (men and women) told me they would rather have it used to support farmers as individuals:⁹ 'FLO organizes the social premium, it pays for community costs. But we need to make a case to FLO to help farmers individually'; 'Social premium money don't really go to the farmer'; 'Fairtrade offers a guaranteed market, but the price often don't

have to do with [that of] inputs'; 'It is more secure with Fairtrade, but they do not invest in production'; 'FLO's premise is that we must use the social premium for social and environmental development, but we farmers want to get money to put in[to] our own pocket'.

Like the social premium, the Fairtrade Foundation and FLO institutes more-than-market values through its Fairtrade groups, which are organized at both national and municipal levels (there are seventeen municipal groups in St Vincent and one national committee). Municipal Fairtrade groups hold mandatory meetings at least once a month, and the national committee holds meetings several times a year. At these meetings, Fairtrade representatives and farmers discuss changes in standards and certification procedures,¹⁰ plans for the social premium, farmer support groups like work exchanges and other information related to Fairtrade production. Like the need to follow technical standards, however, the requirement to attend meetings does not always coincide with the ideas and values of *all* banana farmers. As Slocum (2006) has argued, many banana farmers in the Windward Islands entered into farming to be free from dependency on other people, such as employers. This value of autonomy does not always coincide with the need to attend community meetings. 'I became a farmer because I wanted to be self-employed'; 'I entered farming because I liked the independence'; 'When I entered Fairtrade, I lost some independence. I had to go to meetings' (commentaries from both men and women farmers). While some farmers interviewed for this project lamented their loss of autonomy, others (again, both men and women) criticized Vincentian farmers for their lack of commitment: 'I want some of the members of my Fairtrade group to attend the meetings for me, but they not into it, they say I best for it'; 'We need to change the way people think. One time they talk cooperation, the other time they want to do they own thing. ... They not reading what Fairtrade give them'; 'Fairtrade is not a community [in St Vincent]'.

By contrast, posters in British supermarkets sponsored by the Fairtrade Foundation claim to represent *and* recognize the interests of farming *communities*, and to redistribute at least some global

wealth by creating community-based farming groups that empower farmers to have a voice. While it is clear that some charismatic members of Vincentian Fairtrade groups have been empowered, the democratic values of Fairtrade do not always work in practice. As one farmer complained:

Our local Fairtrade group is not democratic. They brought in ideas about democratic elections [from the outside], but the elections were not announced at the meeting. ... The Fair Trade people from Europe are bringing over institutions, rules ... that they have developed over centuries. But they do not have that history here (male banana farmer and project manager for the St Vincent Ministry of Agriculture's diversification project).

Since Vincentian banana farmers are differently positioned in past and present power geometries, it is not surprising that their knowledges, values and practices do not always coincide with Northern understandings of democracy and empowerment. If transnationalisms are multiply-inhabited as Crang *et al.* (2003) argue, then the admirable goals of the Fairtrade Foundation may actually perpetuate the *non-recognition* of its most important agents, rendering banana farmers 'invisible via ... authoritative representational, communicative, and interpretive practices' (Fraser 1996: 7). Recent calls within the West Indies to re-organize the banana industry to fit the scales of the nation and region (among similar projects for national and regional food security)¹¹ point to an alternative model for food justice that may better enable the capabilities of people differentially positioned in relation to colonial histories and global market networks.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have deployed Nancy Fraser's ideas about framing justice in terms of the (sometimes competing) claims of representation, redistribution, and recognition to argue that, however well-intentioned they may be, Fair Trade policies may inadvertently reproduce asymmetries of power whose contours can be traced back to the colonial period. Based on evidence from the Caribbean, we have

argued that while the Fairtrade Foundation may promote a just cause – proper remuneration of farming communities and greater attention to their social and environmental welfare –, the localized and historical perspectives of producers in ‘developing’ countries risk being eclipsed by the ideals of Northern consumers and activists. Indeed, as we have argued in this paper, it is often the case that some aspects of banana farming, especially those associated with Northern knowledges and interests, are prioritized in Fairtrade networks over the circumstances and values – or the recognition – of the farmers themselves.

In an earlier paper, Jackson *et al.* (2009) argued that moral economies of food could be examined in terms of a shifting geography of responsibility, articulated through a spatial vocabulary of connection and disconnection, mobilized through historical imaginations – including processes of selective remembering and forgetting. While that paper focused on the production and consumption of two different agri-food commodities (chicken and sugar), this paper has focused on the moral economies of Fair Trade bananas, using a Caribbean case study to deepen and broaden these earlier arguments.

Based on fieldwork in the Windward Islands, we have shown how the moral economy of Fairtrade bananas can have paradoxical effects. Intended to improve the livelihood of Caribbean producers, redressing longstanding inequalities that are rooted in the colonial past, these historical connections continue to cast a long shadow. While the Fairtrade Foundation and its regulatory body, FLO, guarantee a minimum price for Caribbean producers, these institutions can have the unintended consequence of reinforcing the role of farmers in the Global South as producers of food for consumers in the Global North. However benign their intentions for Caribbean farmers, Fairtrade policies, standards and institutions operate under terms and conditions that are set elsewhere in the global economy, the validity and effectiveness of which some Caribbean producers clearly contest. The emplacing of Caribbean farmers *as producers*, ignoring their simultaneous and legitimate role *as*

consumers, is also rooted in the history of colonial production and imperial trade which underpins the reluctance of many Windward Islanders to take up this socially-tainted occupation. These policies and practices, in turn, conspire to perpetuate an export-orientated economy rather than seeing the production of bananas and other staple crops as a potential solution to local and regional food insecurity.

To return to the wider argument of our introduction, we contend that this Caribbean case study has a valid contribution to make to several recent debates in geography and agri-food studies including debates about the intersection of moralities and markets, the artificiality of separating the geographies of production and consumption, and the significant intersections between the material and symbolic properties of agri-food products such as Fairtrade bananas. Emphasising the non-recognition of Caribbean consumers and the partial representation of Caribbean producers in contemporary policies and practices has enriched our understanding of the limits of Fair Trade to fulfil its historic objectives. Despite the best of intentions, we maintain, such policies better serve the interests of those who are positioned as ethically-enlightened consumers, located overwhelmingly in the Global North, compared to those located in the Global South who are positioned primarily as the ethically-demanding recipients of such policies. Through the unintended consequences and paradoxical effects of such policies, the interests of Caribbean consumers go largely unrecognised and the interests of Caribbean producers are, at best, only partially recognised.

Comparative research would be required to ascertain whether Fair Trade policies disadvantage banana farmers in St. Vincent more or less than the producers of these and other commodities elsewhere in the Caribbean or Latin America. But, we maintain, the politics of recognition provides a valuable framework for assessing the relative effects of Fair Trade policies and practices in terms of their asymmetrical power geometries and uneven geographies of responsibility. In fact, Nancy Fraser's arguments about representation, redistribution, and recognition have the potential to open up the

study of food's moral economies more broadly to a variety of other issues including the importance of a range of postcolonial positionalities in shaping contemporary agri-food networks. Such research is not just an academic pursuit, but part of a wider project we share with activists and practitioners to understand and enable more environmentally-sustainable and socially-just modes of production and consumption.

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¹ We distinguish between Fair Trade as an ideology and social movement and Fairtrade as a specific manifestation of this movement by the Fairtrade Foundation.

² For a more detailed consideration of the mutual constitution of political and moral economies, see Sayer (2000).

³ For an overview of recent work see the series of reviews on 'Geographies of food' by Cook et al. (2006, 2008, 2011).

⁴ The Fairtrade Labelling Organization (FLO) certifies various Fair Trade initiatives including those of the Fairtrade Foundation.

⁵ For similar accounts of Northern consumer values, see Cook and Crang (1996) and Friedberg (2003).

⁶ Bananas are reported to be the best-selling product in British supermarkets, although fungal infections such as Panama disease have caused fears of global scarcity and rising prices ('Bananageddon: Millions face hunger as deadly fungus Panama disease decimates global banana crop', *The Independent* 4 April 2014).

⁷ Wilson thanks her colleague, Dr Wendy-Ann Isaac, for this information. Significantly, too, Whatmore (2003) cites an outbreak of Black Sigatoka as further evidence of the case for a more-than-human geography.

⁸ An aversion to agricultural work may also reflect the vulnerability of Caribbean producers to changes in market conditions over which they have little control. Compare this case study to the vulnerability of Caribbean sugar producers to recent changes in the global economy, as outlined by Ward *et al.* (2008) and Richardson-Ngwenya (2012).

⁹ This is similar to the findings of Momsen (2009: 141) who also interviewed Vincentian Fair Trade banana farmers.

¹⁰ On the moral economy of grades and standards, see Busch (2000).

¹¹ For instance, the Caribbean Economic Community (CARICOM), which includes St. Vincent and other West Indian islands, has recently passed the Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy.